

## PUSH - BACKS



This exercise strengthens and improves low back stability and the abdominals at once. Push-Backs are simply Tall Sits combined with pushing backward into a balloon, which provides resistance.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Promotes core stability.
- ⦿ Strengthens low back extensors and stabilizers.
- ⦿ Strengthens abdominal muscles.

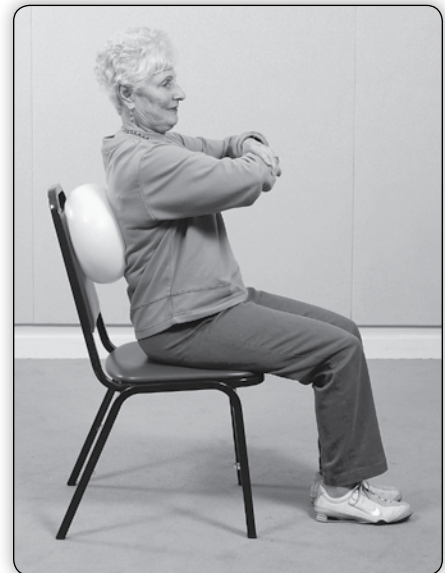
### ***Set It Up »***

You will need one balloon or Slo Mo ball for each participant, and a few extra. If you have a bigger budget, use Slo Mo balls. One variation uses a balance disc and a chair with arms.

### ***How to Do It »***

#### **The Start**

- ⦿ Participants sit toward the edge of the chair. Feet are flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Shoulders are over hips, head pulled slightly back, and chin is level.
- ⦿ Participants should place the balloon behind their back, between their back and the chair. The balloon should be at the small of the back for an easier exercise, and higher, between the shoulder blades, for more difficulty. Some participants may need assistance placing their balloon behind them.
- ⦿ Once the balloon is in place, scoot back so the balloon is firmly held against the chair.
- ⦿ Place the arms on the chest with the forearms crossed or for greater difficulty, use Genie Arms (as shown).



#### **The Moves**

Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Inhale and sit tall.
- ⦿ Exhale, draw shoulder blades together, and press back into the balloon.
- ⦿ Keep the back tall and core braced.
- ⦿ Hold 2 seconds. (Participants should notice that the abdominal muscles tighten and the low back is working, too.)
- ⦿ Relax.
- ⦿ Repeat six to eight times, as tolerated; progress to doing 12 repetitions.

### ***Take It Further »***

- ⦿ Have your participants do Genie Arms. It is the same exercise except that participant will lift their crossed arms from the chest. Forearms are parallel to the floor. That's the Genie Arms look.
- ⦿ Increase the number of repetitions or the hold time.
- ⦿ Try combining Push-Backs with Whooh, Whoohh, Whoohhhh! (see page 110).

### ***Give It More Balance »***

- ⦿ Place the feet in tandem position, heels lifted.

#### ***Genie Arms With a Twist***

This variation looks similar to a bear scratching its back against a tree. Participants brace their core muscles, then roll their shoulder blades over and around the balloon for the bear in the woods effect. They'll scratch their own back!

- ⦿ Start out doing a Push-Back.
- ⦿ Inhale and sit tall.
- ⦿ Exhale and press back against balloon.
- ⦿ Inhale and hold the breath.
- ⦿ Exhale and rotate the trunk to the right (right shoulder blade will roll around the balloon).
- ⦿ Inhale and rotate back to the center position.
- ⦿ Repeat, but this time rotate to the left (left shoulder blade will roll around the balloon)
- ⦿ Keep alternating until 6 repetitions are complete, build to doing 12 repetitions.
- ⦿ Keep the spine tall and ribs lifted throughout.



### ***Keep It Safe »***

Remind participants to keep their core braced and their spine lengthened.

### ***Live It »***

Push-backs of any kind (basic, with Genie arms, or like bears in the woods) are great for low back stability.